PREFERENCES AND PRACTICES OF PHYSICIANS IN CONSUMPTION OF MEDICAL LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Many practicing physicians have reported feeling overwhelmed by the deluge of scientific information. This survey was undertaken to improve the understanding of physician challenges with and preferences for consumption of medical literature.

Research design and methods: Exploratory research was conducted via a web-based Explorator®/EHV survey.

Results: Twenty-six physicians across 13 specialties met the inclusion criteria and provided complete responses (20% response rate); 65% moderately to strongly agreed that keeping abreast of scientific information is challenging (Figure 1), with time constraints listed as the key contributing challenge (88%). Physicians indicated that being a proponent to search for articles of interest (42%), truly relevant sources (eg, peer recommendations) were selected as top sources for identifying articles of interest. Physicians were asked to rate their opinion on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “very strongly disagree” and 5 being “very strongly agree”.

Time constraints were noted by physicians as the key contributing challenge to staying abreast of current scientific information. Physicians were asked to rate their opinion on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “very strongly disagree” and 5 being “very strongly agree”.

RESULTS

The survey was held open until 25 physicians who met the inclusion criteria completed the survey (to reflect agreement with Epocrates)

Among those giving online for professional reasons, Wikipedia was used as a source for medical information by ~ 10% of physicians.

With the volume of literature continuing to increase, so do the means for finding the most relevant and credible information. In today’s world, literature aggregators and websites, that provide literature summaries will likely continue to grow in popularity among interactive assets (Figure 5).

When identifying key findings, 40% watch/listen to article synopses, and 96% read the article using a search engine (eg, Google) as they were using PubMed (46% for each method).

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CONCLUSIONS

While the survey was small and the results were not generalizable, this physicians indicated that time constraints significantly complicate their ability to keep up with medical literature. Physicians are coping with these physicians indicated time constraints significantly complicate their ability to keep up with medical literature. Physicians are coping with time constraints by actively searching and consuming only the most relevant details, utilizing technology to supplement understanding.

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